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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/779,782 | 02/08/2001 | Frank Venegas JR. | IDS-14502/14 | 6741 |
| 25006 | 7590 | 04/07/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| GIFFORD, KRASS, GROH, SPRINKLE & CITKOWSKI, P.C | | | CANFIELD, ROBERT | |
| PO BOX 7021 | | | ART UNIT | |
| TROY, MI 48007-7021 | | | PAPER NUMBER | |
| | | | 3635 | |
| DATE MAILED: 04/07/2006 | | | | |

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/779,782

Applicant(s)

VENEGAS, FRANK

Examiner

Robert J. Canfield

Art Unit

3635

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 January 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-9, 11, 12 and 14-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-9, 11, 12 and 14-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 2-7, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 June 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>02/08/01</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 3635

1. The new examiner of record apologizes for the frustration caused by the previous examination of the instant application. The finality of the previous Office action is withdrawn. The amendment after final filed 02/18/04 has been entered. Claims 2-9, 11, 12 and 14-21 remain pending. Claims 1, 10 and 13 have been canceled.

2. The drawings filed 06/15/01 are objected to because figure 1 requires bracketing “}”. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the side panel and side edges must be clearly shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

4. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: the examiner finds no mention of side edges of the front and

Art Unit: 3635

back panels in the specification. Embodiment 12 shown in solid lines in figure 1 does not appear to have side edges but rather a continuous semi-circular top edge. It appears that the alternative embodiments 12' and 12" shown by hidden lines in Figure 1 could be considered to have side edges but they are not labeled by a reference numeral.

5. The use of the trademark Velcro has been noted in this application. It should be capitalized wherever it appears and be accompanied by the generic terminology in the specification (page 4).

Although the use of trademarks is permissible in patent applications, the proprietary nature of the marks should be respected and every effort made to prevent their use in any manner which might adversely affect their validity as trademarks.

6. Claims 2-7, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 are objected to because of the following informalities: the preambles of the claims fail to agree with the preamble of the claim from which they depend. Appropriate correction is required.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 2-9, 11, 12 and 14-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Art Unit: 3635

The claims fail to particularly point out the invention as understood. As understood the front and back panels have a semi-circular or arc-shaped top edge. It is unclear where any side edges may be and if there are side edges where the side edges end and the top edges begin. It is also unclear how claim 9 further limits claim 8 from which it depends. The language "smoothly transitions through semi-circular side edges" in claim 8 is unclear. Similarly the language "smoothly transition in the top edge" in claim 9, and "smoothly transition through an integrally formed semi-circular side edge" in claims 16 and 19 is unclear. In order for something to transition it must move from one location to another.

9. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

10. Claims 2-9, 11, 12 and 14-21 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,971,198. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant claims are included within the patented claims as the patent claims. The side panels of the patent claims equate to the front and back panels of the application claims and since the patent claims call for the side panels being joined by a curved section they inherently have a curved top edge.

11. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

12. Claims 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 14-16 and 18 as best understood are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 3,307,282 to Caulkins.

Caulkins provides a protective cover comprised spaced front and back opaque panels 24 having a top edge, which smoothly transition to side edges via curved or semi-circular portions. The portion shown covering the tread of the tire can be considered a side panel connecting the front and back panels. At least one of the front and back panels is shown with a display including stenciled letters. The guard rail of the claims is only set forth as the intended use environment.

Art Unit: 3635

13. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14. Claims 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 14-16 and 18 as best understood are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Des. 178,886 to Kaye.

Kaye provides a protective cover comprised of spaced front and back panels having a top edge, which smoothly transition to side edges via curved or semi-circular portions. A side panel is shown connecting the front and back panels. At least one of the front and back panels is shown with a display including stenciled letters. It would have been an obvious matter of design to choice to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the panels be opaque to provide contrast to the display. The guard rail of the claims is only set forth as the intended use environment.

15. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

16. There is nothing of record reflecting that the IDS filed 02/08/01 was considered. The sole reference cited has been considered as it was cited in the supplemental IDS filed 06/15/01, which has been considered.

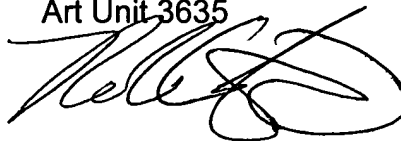
Art Unit: 3635

17. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert J. Canfield whose telephone number is 571-272-6840. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl Friedman can be reached on 571-272-6842. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Robert J Canfield
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3635



03/31/06